

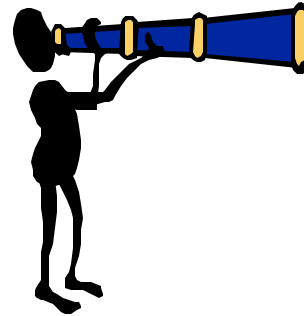
VISION STATEMENT

Definition:

A vision statement is a compelling image (description) of a desirable state of reality made possible by accomplishing the mission in a way that is consistent with the core values of key stakeholders.

- It is an inspiring view of the preferred future.

Why? Vision provides the context for mission and strategy, gives long-term direction and provides meaning at a deep, human level.



Notes on Vision Statements

Effective Vision Statements should:

- Include understandable, clear, strong and attractive images of the future;
- Be specific enough to provide direction and purpose (but not measurable);
- Engage the whole person – the heart as well as the mind;
- Speak to why you are doing what you are doing; and
- Identify the impact you want to have.

MISSION STATEMENT

A mission statement is sentence or two that states the reasons for a program's existence. It identifies what the program does, why, and for whom. A mission statement reminds everyone of the unique purposes promoted and served by this organization/ group.

Notes on Mission Statements

A mission statement is a like a company logo -- it is your organization's logo to be presented with every public awareness campaign, every Board initiative, and to any funding prospects.

The Mission Statement need not be lengthy. Effective Mission Statements should:

- Be clear and understandable to all;
- Be brief enough for most to remember;
- Specify the "business" the organization is in – the who, what, where, when, and how;
- Be broad enough to allow flexibility in implementation, but not so broad as to permit a lack of focus;
- Can be utilized when making organization decisions;
- Reflects members' values, beliefs and philosophies about the organization's operation and culture;
- Reflects attainable goals; and
- Serves as an energy source and rallying point.

STRATEGIC PLANNING CONCEPTS

(by Michael Grob; Minneapolis, Minnesota)

1. Long range planning essentially means creating a vision of where we want to be at some point in time (e.g., year 2010). Strategic planning involves figuring out how we're going to get to that vision from where we are (present). This kind of planning emphasizes longer time lines and is distinct from the fiscal year planning and budgeting routinely done by non-profits.
2. In visualizing and choosing desired futures, it is important to remember and learn from history. The two most relevant historical perspectives are:
 - a. What are the lessons to be learned and insights noted from our recent past (last five years)?
 - b. What values, beliefs and assumptions from our history do we wish to project forward and organize around in the future?
3. Reasonable assumptions must be made about the future in order to plan for it. Since assumptions are not facts, but guesses, assumptions will not be correct in the precise sense. Assuming that those doing the planning are informed, intelligent and well-intentioned, it is reasonable to base decisions on their views of the future. It is wise, however, to check these assumptions with people and information outside the organization to balance subjective and objective perspectives.
4. To develop a vision of a desired future four basic questions can be considered:
 - a. What target populations should we serve?
 - b. What contributions and breakthroughs in our fields should we make?
 - c. What financial conditions do we wish to realize?
 - d. What values and beliefs do we wish to promote?

Strategic Planning Structure

Goals: Goals are the general ends toward which your organization directs its efforts. In strategic planning, goals may be ranked for priority. Goals stretch and challenge a program, but they are realistic and achievable.

- Goals provide a clear and understandable direction for action.
- Goals provide a sense of direction by describing the end result without locking in specific action steps.
- Goals are unrestricted by time.
- Goals contain quantifiable elements in order that it may be gauged for success or failure.
- Goals reflect the organization's priorities.



Objectives: Objectives are clear and quantifiable targets for specific actions within a specific time frame. They mark quantifiable interim steps toward achieving a program's long-range mission and goals. Linked directly to program goals, objectives are measurable, time-based statements of intent. They emphasize the results of program actions at the end of a specific time period.

- Objectives demonstrate progress toward the stated goal.
- Objectives state specifically what the organization intends to accomplish.
- Objectives are realistic and attainable.
- Objectives describe an outcome in terms of specific targets and time frames.

Strategies: Strategies are the steps or methods used to achieve objectives. Formulated from goals and objectives, a strategy is the action taken to achieve tasks and products and ultimately to achieve program outcomes, with the best use of resources. A strategy may reflect budgetary and other resources, as well as responsible parties.

- Strategies reflect all the necessary steps to achieving objectives.
- When all strategies are implemented, we can assure that the objective(s) will be reached.
- Strategies may directly support and affect any statewide or national benchmarks (if applicable).